WAR AND OUR RELIGION

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I. "CHRISTIANITY AND WAR."
II. "THE BETTER SIDE OF WAR."
III. "CHRISTIANITY AND PATRIOTISM."

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PREFACE

We are all of us to some extent borrowers of the thoughts and ideas of others, consciously or unconsciously. It is, therefore, possible that there is nothing original in any of the arguments in these Sermons. The writer knows that he owes some of those in the first Sermon to F. D. Maurice, Dr. J. B. Mozley, and Dr. J. Martineau. These Sermons are put forth in the hope that they may be some slight contribution toward the right solution of a deep problem which presses upon many devout persons in this time of warfare throughout a large part of Christendom. If they help in any degree to reconcile that, in such persons, which thinks with that which feels and prays, their object will have been attained. A considerable part of the secular literature of the day shows how largely this problem is misunderstood.

William C. Tuting.

I.—CHRISTIANITY AND WAR.

"Nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom."—St. Matt. xxiv. 7.

"If my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight that I should not be delivered to the Jews."—St. John xviii. 36.

"Christianity and War." As we put these two forces together, the one essentially spiritual, the other apparently utterly material, at least, in its methods, the cry goes up from many devout souls: "What is there in common between righteousness and unrighteousness?" "What partnership has light with darkness?" "Where can harmony be found between Christ and Belial?"

At the very outset, therefore, we find ourselves as Christians, perplexed; for, though Christ came nearly two thousand years ago, war has not ceased at any time in Christendom. At the present moment, the most gigantic struggle in all the world's long history rages amongst the chief nations of Christian Europe.

War is so devastating, so hideous in its red carnage, and never so hideous as to-day; so awful in its calamities at the moment, and long after the drums have ceased to beat to battle, and the leaden hail has been restrained, that the continuance of warfare in the Christian era seems to many incompatible with Christian principles.

What is war? War is the expression and application of force as an effective argument and instrument in the settlement of national differences. It is merely the form which war takes that makes it so suspect a thing from the Christian point of view. It is evident that Christianity cannot view with entire disfavour all use of force in the affairs of the world, for force of some kind must be the ultimate argument in the ordering of the individuals who collectively make up the nation. Every court of law, and every prison substantiate the fact. "What else," it has been pertinently asked, "is the whole penal administration of a country but its perennial civil war against its own incorrigible criminals?"

It is felt, however, by many, that force which deprives of human life, as war does, is, of necessity, under the ban of Christianity. But if "capital punishment" be allowed as not contrariant to

Christianity, then the deprivation even of life, under due authority, cannot but be recognised as a legitimate argument in the affairs of nations. As a matter of fact, "capital punishment" is in the same category as war, in so far as the regulated deprivation of human life is concerned. It is partly because the infliction of death in war ranges over so much larger an area that many do not recognise this fact. But if, at any time, a large part of a population murdered others, then this fact would become strikingly patent. There is, of course, this difference, the murderer is helpless, and cannot resist, whereas the combatants on both sides in war can resist, and die resisting.

We are quite familiar with the taunt that although Christ, the Prince of Peace, came long ago, yet Christian nations still engage in war. On the surface it seems incongruous that these two forces—the one instinct with love, the other instinct with force; the one breathing out peace and goodwill, the other belching out strife and turmoil—should co-exist together. No wonder that some assert that "Christian nations ought never to go to war." It seems all so easy to settle the problem thus. It appears so simple to determine this perplexity in a sentence of

eight words. But, in general, no single short sentence can ever reconcile, or dispose of deep problems. There is no such short-cut out of this perplexity.

No such simple statement can satisfy those who look at the facts of life. Consider this statement: "No Christian people ought ever to go to war." If that be so, then every Christian nation, because it is such, ought to allow itself to become the prey of any non-Christian nation, which, having no Christian scruples on the matter, chooses to come against it. Thus, the civilised Christian world would inevitably become the haunts and home of the savage races of the earth. These, conscious of the fact that a Christian nation would not resist with force of arms, would come with gay hearts, because sure of victory.

Again, if it be that a Christian nation, as such, is cut off from the arbitrament of war, then no Christian nation ought to go to the help of the oppressed in any part of the world. The slave traffic, for example, must not be suppressed.

To the downtrodden the Christian nation must only cry: "I pity you, from the depths of my Christian heart I pity you; but I cannot help you by weapons of war, for to do so would violate

my Christian conscience, and nullify my Christian principles. Indeed, by so befriending you, my claim to be a Christian nation would be demolished. We, who might otherwise deliver you, must leave you to your fate unpitied, except by such pity as exhausts itself in lamentations and sighs."

These two illustrations, to which many more might be added, suffice to show that the relation between Christianity and war cannot be settled by saying that: "No Christian nation ought ever to go to war." The fact is, that the demand made on Christianity that it ought to have abolished war is an utterly unreasonable demand.

But, it may be said: "Although it does seem impossible, on these grounds, to deny the right of Christian nations under any circumstances to wage war, yet *Christian* nations ought not to war against one another." It is an undoubted fact that the Christian ideal is to reduce, as far as possible, the resort to arms; but the fact is that no completely Christian nation has ever existed, or is ever likely to exist, therefore, that Christian ideal is never likely to be fulfilled. So long as any one nation is imperfectly Christian, so long will war continue as a method of arbitrament in the differences of people.

It is quite impossible for nations to discriminate either by saying: "We, as a Christian nation, will not resist," or "If you were not a Christian nation we would resist, but as you are such we will not." It is unthinkable that any one Christian nation should say to another: "If you wish to have our country, you are welcome to it; if you choose to bully some little nation you can do so to your heart's content; if you want to starve us out, and imperil our commerce we shall not resist you."

Let it only be known that England, as, in some degree, a Christian nation, will resist no other Christian nation except by argument of speech, and our national existence would not be worth a month's purchase. The race for possession would be to the swiftest, and that nation which could first reach our shores would have this country as a prize for its haste.

Thus, great though the chaos caused by war is, the confusion which would be caused by Christian nations abandoning the right of war is unimaginable. History provides us with no material for thinking that matter out.

It is often supposed that we have to set up some extraordinary defence for the continuance of war in the Christian era, but the fact is that

the causes of, and the reasons for, the persistence of war are rooted in the very nature of things, and are such that they lie outside the province of Christianity to uproot.

So long as separate nations exist, with separate rights, and with specific claims, just or unjust, war there will be—wars of defence, and wars other than of defence. Otherwise, the map to-day ought to be the same as it was at the moment when each people accepted the Gospel. Christianity recognised, as it was bound to do, the splitting up of the family of mankind into separate nations. It is inequitable to taunt Christianity with not having accomplished that which it never set out to do, because war in some degree is inevitable in that condition of things which Christianity has always recognised.

If the whole human race could be formed into one state, under one ruler, then war—external war—would naturally cease. But, even then, there would be no guarantee against the worst kind of war, that is internal civil war.

To the question: "Why has not Christianity done away with war?" the main answer is that: "An alteration in the system of the world would be necessary to stop war, but it is no part of the mission of Christianity to

reconstruct the order of the world. Its province is remedial, and not constructive in this respect. No one who is familiar with the Old Testament can fail to see how large a place war occupies in the providence of God. That literature, extending over a long period, teaches us that, though war may be the expression of human passions, nevertheless it may be also an instrument for accomplishing the very purposes of God. History outside its pages bears the same witness. The conquests by war of Greece and Rome prepared the world for the Christian era, and promoted the expansion of Christianity. The soldier is not of necessity, as some opine, the agent of the devil; he may be, and often is, the servant and the instrument of God most High.

And yet, there are those who affirm that their consciences, as servants of Christ, will not permit them to take up arms under any pretext. But if this be a necessary consequence of Christian discipleship, then every Christian man is cut off from the deepest expression of patriotism, and he must leave it to those least Christian to respond to that heroic utterance of ancient days: "It is a sweet and pleasant thing to die for one's country." Again, if the Christian man is not

to go to war, then if his country is to be saved, it must be saved at others' cost, and sacrifice even of life itself! The Christian too spiritually-minded to take up arms is to profit at others' expense! His home, his trade and commerce, his life, are to be safeguarded by others than himself; the most he will do is to contribute compulsorily, under protest it may be, toward those armies and armaments which protect him and his country. He will endure no hardship of battle, he will merely enjoy the fruits of danger incurred by others. He will share only in the fruits of victory toward which he has declined to contribute by personal service. The truth seems to be that those who will not, "for conscientious reasons," take an active part on the battlefield in the righteous war of to-day, have lost sight of the fact that *force* is the only thing to which Germany will yield. The arguments of speech and diplomacy have failed. The arbitrament of war alone remains. Nor can it be rightly urged that this failure of England, for example, to adopt non-resistance is due to the meagreness of the Christianity of this nation, for these principles are in distinct opposition to national existence.

It may be urged, however, that the matter cannot finally be argued on these broad lines, for, after all, our final Court of Appeal, as Christians, is the Bible, and particularly the New Testament. The Old Testament is evidently saturated with the martial spirit. Were David or other mighty warriors less servants of God because they were warriors? There is no trace of this idea in the Old Testament. Nor is there any single word by which Christ casts odium upon the profession of a soldier. He had plenty of opportunities of doing this, for soldier after soldier came in contact with Him. Had they been sinning necessarily by their occupation He must have told them so, and sought to win them from their evil courses. As a matter of fact, every individual soldier referred to in the New Testament is favourably mentioned. "Men of war," it has been said, "are always susceptible to religious influences."

Indeed, the Roman camps were the best, possibly at times the only, training-schools for the virtues of faithfulness, endurance, straightforwardness, and ordered discipline. It may be said, "but Christ did not resist those who came to take Him in the garden." That fact has, however, no bearing upon nations. It may often

be the duty of Christian persons not to resist personal injuries and insults, when only personal interests are at stake, but on other considerations active resistance is a positive duty.

Respecting these and other like sayings of Christ, this may be said in general, that if each individual stood isolated and alone, the application of these words would be universal, but inasmuch as we are members one of another, the practical application of such precepts is modified and limited by due consideration for the social and public good. The spirit of mere private revenge is alien to the Gospel, but resentment and active hostility to those who assail social and national rights is required by Christianity. Dull serpentine malice is forbidden, but antagonism from which this is charmed is often the duty of Christian persons.

The individual Christian can surrender his own private and personal rights, within limits, but when it is urged that Christian nations are necessarily required to do the same, the answer is that a nation cannot surrender its national rights as the personal Christian can, because the mere individual only abandons his own rights, but the abandonment of national rights means the sacrificing of a nation. A nation

consists of all sorts and conditions of people, and each person, whatever be his position or religious belief, has equal rights, and an equal stake in his country. Thus, the Christian individuals in a State cannot, even collectively, sacrifice the interests of the whole nation, of which possibly they form a somewhat insignificant minority.

For one section of a community to compel another to surrender national rights would inevitably create discontent, and probably civil strife.

The words of Christ, to which reference is often made as if they discountenanced national warfare, cannot be interpreted thus. On one occasion, indeed, He did refer to this matter, and then He said, "If My kingdom were of this world, then would My servants fight that I should not be delivered to the Jews." These words are very significant, for herein He recognised the rightfulness of peoples resisting by warfare the infringement of just rights. Had He come to found one of the political kingdoms of the world, His disciples would not have been encouraged by Him to tamely submit to the martial antagonism of the Roman Cæsar, who would have actively opposed the setting up of a rival Power. He gives no indication that He would have disarmed

His followers; in fact, as it was, He proclaimed, "he that hath no sword, let him sell his garment and buy one." From the sayings and the silences of Christ, we infer that He, whilst utterly rebuking private feuds, did not consider it part of His mission to re-arrange the constitution of the world as comprising, permanently, separate nations, which as has been affirmed, involves national warfare. In other words, He did not condemn wars as being necessarily sinful. The words of Edmund Burke are, therefore, not anti-Christian: "As to war, if it be the means of wrong and violence, it is the sole means of justice amongst nations. Nothing can banish it from the world." One thing more must be said; the horrors of war, concentrated, as each war is, within limits of time and space, fire the imaginations of men with their hideous realities; but the horrors of peace are even more awful than the horrors of war, though not so patent. "Whoever translates," it has been well said, "the holy name Peace by carnal security or luxurious ease, desecrates it, and makes every scriptural application of it unmeaning." St. Augustine has reminded us that "the mischiefs which the city of Rome suffered were not so violent nor so many in the space between the two Punic wars, as they

were at other times; for though they felt the smart of war abroad, yet they enjoyed the sweets of victory; and at home they agreed better than they did in the times of security. In days of peace, the luxury of Asia entered—the worst foe Rome ever felt."

The horrors of peace! There are sins, and there are diseases rampant which silently, and therefore more surely, desolate humanity far more than war does. These go on year in and year out. The lurid glitter of luxury that metallises the soul, the piteous struggle for existence that sickens people of living, eat out the heart and the vigour, physical and moral, of any community more and more widely than war does. These things, indeed, may make it better that a nation should perish as being a nation not worth preserving on God's earth. Lives bereft of honour, and the merchandise of the souls of men and women are worse horrors than the horrors of war. These have no redeeming feature. They have no high motive. Love of self alone bears sway. In the streets of the world's cities, and in the lanes of the villages, there are more sins committed day by day, and night by night, than in any campaign. War slays its thousands, so-called civilisation slays its tens of thousands.

The horrors which spring from war have their compensations, and they have brought many a man and woman nearer to God. The horrors which spring from peace have no compensations, they have thrown no ray of light over this dark world. They have mutilated and wrecked others' lives solely for personal indulgence or advantage, whereas war has stifled love of self in sacrifice for the common good.

It may be soothing to see visions, and dream dreams of universal peace which shall never be broken, but, however much periods of warfare may be lessened by international good-will, or by the commercial interests of nations, still there is nothing, when these arguments fail, that can take the place of war in the affairs of nations. For there is no other arbitrament which can, for example, compel a nation to respect treaties duly made, or by which nations which violate these can receive their due earthly punishment.

It was no careless thinker on deep problems who said in recent times, "Even the terrible right —or rather the stern trust—of Arms, I do not hesitate to claim for every righteous State. It is a solemn appeal to the collective forces, spiritual no less than material, which God has shut up in

our humanity. Not the will and word alone, but the force also, of a people must be held at the disposal of those high trusts for which it has a life given to it in history."

II.—THE BETTER SIDE OF WAR

"Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends."—St. John xv. 13.

"The darkest cloud," it has been said, "has a silver lining." Is this true of the black thunder-cloud of war? This question requires the most careful and the most balanced attention.

Christianity has never in any age abolished war. It never undertook to do so, because it never undertook to abolish nations, and the existence of distinct nations means the existence of national rights to be at least maintained.

There is no other argument than that of war, by which, when all other arguments have failed, nations can continue and maintain their due rights among the nations of the earth.

The progress of Christian principles, and of civilisation in Christian lands, has emphasised the barbarous aspects of war as an instrument in national affairs.

When all peoples everywhere throughout the whole world consist only of complete Christian persons, then, and only then, will be seen in fact that splendid vision of the Hebrew prophet of swords being beaten into ploughshares, and spears into pruning hooks, and of war being learnt no more.

That time is not yet, and the signs of the dawning of the day of universal and permanent peace are not evident.

We can go a step further, and say that so long as each living person is not a complete Christian, the cessation of war would not be an unmixed blessing. For times of peace in imperfectly Christian nations bring their perils to moral and spiritual life—perils of luxury and avarice, of gross materialism, of pride and greed and ostentation. The pursuit of wealth and self-indulgence sap the moral strength of a nation far more than war does. "War its thousands slays, peace its ten thousands." The greatest of English poets has sung of "the canker of a calm world, and long peace."

The matter needs no argument, the verdict of history both ancient and modern is beyond dispute. War may be regarded as a scourge; but it is a scourge which nations, under existing

circumstances, need. Universal peace for all time would not necessarily make nations purer, better and more spiritual.

There are two distinct aspects of war: one the physical, the other the moral. This second aspect is often overlooked in the welter of human and animal suffering which warfare, and particularly modern warfare, causes. "The horrors of war" need no exercise of the imagination. They are all too real for that, and they can scarcely be exaggerated. "The purple legacy of bleeding war" is a hideous bequest. But all this must not blind us to the other aspect—the moral aspect—of war.

Two things need to be noted here, the moral aspect of any war is determined by the fact as to whether it is a war waged in the course of justice or of injustice.

And, again, does war bring out or not some of the very finest moral traits in human nature?

Now, although war has not been abolished by Christianity, and it is not likely, for the reasons already given, to make wars to cease from off the earth, yet, unless Christianity is to belie itself, it must have something to say, and to do towards this inevitable necessity of present human affairs. Before, however, we consider any

salutary influence that Christianity has had on the conduct of warfare, we are confronted by the dismal fact that, in this twentieth century after the dawn of Christianity, the instruments of warfare are the most terrible and desolating that have ever been used, And yet, in fairness to *Christian* nations, this must be said that if any one nation, Christian or otherwise, uses these, all must do so, or else, any nation which refused to use them would speedily cease to exist. If England confined itself to the bows and arrows of our ancestors of long ago, it would soon become the prey of any better-equipped people.

It is easy to say, for example, " England, as a Christian nation, ought to abandon these hideous engines of war, torpedoes, mines, submarines, bombs, and such like." But if any possible enemy uses them, unless we choose to surrender our place and position as a nation, we are compelled to do likewise. Until a nation engages in war with the purpose of suffering defeat, no other course is open.

And, further, until nations agree together to abandon these as weapons of war, every nation must develop all instruments of war which are calculated to stave off national disaster, and to promote national success.

Only on the ground that a Christian nation ought to do nothing toward victory, but everything toward national defeat, can the use of weapons of war most calculated to secure victory be condemned.

Still, Christian opinion, that is, opinion moulded and influenced, whether consciously or unconsciously, by Christian principles of humanity, condemns many of the methods of modern warfare, but no Christian nation can act by itself. It is devoutly to be hoped—and the very terribleness of these methods inclines one to think that the time may come, at no distant date (and possibly as a result of this great war), when the civilised nations of the world may consent to discontinue some of these engines of warfare in their conflict one with another. But it must be borne in mind that there is no definite Christian opinion among non-Christian races to make them do likewise. Now, what effect and influence has Christianity had in this matter of war? More than many people think. Generally, it has set going in the Christian conscience the ideal of peace, and the idea of war as only the last resort when other arguments have failed to settle international differences.

We are required to at least set up some moral

justification for any war engaged in. We are compelled, in some degree, to apologise for every war that is waged. That some of the pleas may be specious, and may even be self-righteous does not alter the fact that righteous pleas are required to be urged. Christian nations are compelled to discriminate between righteous and unrighteous wars. There is a striking witness to this in the fact that each of the Christian nations now at war is seeking to prove to the respective national conscience that it is warring in a righteous cause. What does this striking fact signify? It means that the moral equation is a national asset.

The Christian world has been forced to tremble lest God, the unerring Arbiter between causes just and unjust, decide in His secret counsels for or against the moral character of the war that is being waged, as regards each nation engaged therein. And further, Christian nations have been compelled to fear the judgment even of mankind outside as well as inside their own respective boundaries. No such considerations trouble non-Christian peoples, no such scruples weigh upon their consciences.

The contention that "might is right" has been and is still by no means unknown in Christian

countries; but that is the accepted maxim unquestioned amongst nations untouched by the Gospel. It behoves no Christian nation to boast that it has entirely discarded that worldly, material maxim: but Christian nations feel uncomfortable at heart lest the verdict of mankind be in greater or less degree, that the endeavour is being made to enforce might in defiance of right.

Again, it is recognised to-day amongst Christian nations that it is not mere armaments that count in the long run, in international wars amongst Christian peoples.

Of enthusiasms, moral enthusiasm ranges very high in this matter of war. Spiritual enthusiasm is the highest of all enthusiasms, but that and warfare are at opposite poles. It is that fact which makes wars for the propagation of the Gospel, and the attempt to enforce any particular doctrine by the sword or fire so abhorrent to an enlightened Christian conscience. But moral enthusiasm has large place in this matter of war. Through its action in Spain in 1808, and in Russia in 1812, the greatest commander of modern times—possibly of all time—Napoleon, received his death-blow. Through its action, Italy, in spite of immense opposition, achieved her political regeneration.

Rulers may appeal to their people amongst whom militarism reigns, and war-fever rages, but fever brings delirium, and militarism its Nemesis. But moral enthusiasm—sprung from the conviction that the nation's cause is just—is poles asunder from mere war-fever, and its delirium, and is ultimately the more potent.

When we are assured that war is the expression of the grossest materialism, we may well reply that there is a *moral* factor in the campaigns of Christian countries which relieves war to same extent of its grossness.

At the bar of the national conscience every war is arraigned, and has to be justified, if possible. Moral enthusiasm reigns fullest where the national conscience is most Christian. It has been said that "an army which has taken the field without enthusiasm is beaten before the battle begins."

Patriotism may effect much, but patriotism touched with moral enthusiasm can withstand disaster, and rise superior to defeat.

It has been noted that the action of Christianity on war is limited, limited by the inevitable facts of human life. The action of this inward force seems to lie in two directions, to reduce war to becoming the extra-ordinary method of settling

national differences; and secondly to mitigate and relieve war of, so far as possible, its horrors.

Under the first, comes the method of arbitration, that is the argument of conference and speech, in the last resort before an impartial tribunal. Long ago, a French King communicated to our English Queen, Elizabeth, a project for diminishing the number of wars in Christendom—this very method of conference

That was centuries ago, but the movement has gathered force since then, and many a martial carnage has been arrested by Courts of Arbitration. Even the non-Christian Empire of Japan forty years ago submitted a question between itself and Peru to be determined by arbitration. In recent years a "Temple of Peace," has been erected at the Hague.

Still, there is no power to compel nations to accept this method of arbitration, though we may well pray that Christian nations may more and more become inclined to choose arbitration rather than war, as being on a higher moral plane than war. We cannot, however, hide from ourselves that it is very questionable whether arbitration and treaties can ever make wars to cease from off the earth.

In fact, we at this present moment, are engaged

in war because Germany tore to shreds "a scrap of paper" by which it had agreed to respect the neutrality of Belgium. We cannot forget that the diplomatist, Bismarck, used these words, "The observation of treaties between great states is only conditional until the struggle for life puts them to the proof. No great people would ever consent to sacrifice its existence for a treaty."

The second direction in which Christianity has moved is toward humanity in certain of the consequences of warfare. The moral sense of Christendom demands that the maimed and the prisoner shall not be subjected to the fate which overtook them in the pagan civilisations of ancient days.

In Greece, and Rome of olden times, the armed combatant who fell into the hands of their enemies were entirely at their mercy, though mercy, as we know it, did not exist. But here, we must be just, for Plato, in the "Republic," drew up laws for civilised warfare. "Non-combatants to be spared, no houses to be burnt, no farms to be devastated, the dead to be honourably buried, no trophies of war to be placed in the temples of the gods." Still, in general, the awful adage rang out over heathendom, "The right of

war is infinite." Thus, might, pitiless might, was enthroned.

But the scene in this respect has changed, though Christian warriors may, in some cases, forget the dictates of Christian humanity. These, however, bring upon themselves the execration of civilised opinion.

In the Franco-Prussian war of 1870, hideous as its carnage was, the trains in both countries were filled with wounded who had been skilfully tended by their foes, and with captives who had been cared for by those against whom they had fought.

From the moment of disablement, whether by wounds or capture, they were regarded as no longer foes. When the Emperor of the French surrendered, he was lodged in a princely castle, which, though strictly a prison, was also a palace. When Osman Pasha, the Turkish Commander, surrendered at Plevna, in 1877, to the Russians he was treated rather as the Tsar's son than as a foreign enemy.

The killing of prisoners, and the killing or further maiming of wounded foes was sternly forbidden by rules of war drawn up in 1863. In various respects barbarous treatment has been prohibited at international conferences in the interests of Christian humanity.

One more fact must be noted. The whole of Europe is marshalled beneath the banner of the Red Cross. Its ensign waves almost over the world, and those who wear this mystic sign may not be interfered with in their ministry, of help and healing. The whole purpose of this humane league is to oppose the arms of charity to the arms of war, and to make a kind of war upon war itself.

The better side of war—the silver lining of the thunder-clouds of war. First, and foremost stands out that which is the essential and fundamental characteristic of the sailor's and soldier's calling, SELF-SACRIFICE. So splendid is this willingness to die for the sake of one's country, so intimately is it a part of warfare, that one wonders how else the grandest achievements of human life could be wrought to the same extent.

"Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends." Apart from war, the opportunities are few for the expression of this love, than which none is greater.

As the gladiators of old Rome passed into the arena to die, this salutation rose from them, "Hail, Caesar, those about to die salute thee."

There may be sometimes in this readiness of

the men of war to die something of an animal defiance of death: but it is not for us to decide that point: all we know for certain is that the warrior is willing to surrender up his life in his country's cause.

We wonder sometimes that God has not made wars to cease from off the earth, from Christendom at least.

May it be that nations cannot learn the sublimest of all human qualities—that of self-sacrifice—in so large a measure otherwise than by warfare? In the midst of all that is so hideous in war, there is raised up before the eyes of mankind the glory and the beauty of self-sacrifice. And those who, in their dulness, miss the signs of it in daily life, though they are there too, can scarcely fail to take it to heart when all the world is ringing with it.

And this self-sacrifice expresses itself not merely in the sailor's and soldier's surrender of life.

Recent events on the part of a few misguided women have threatened to bring womanhood into contempt; but the willing self-sacrifice of countless women in this time of war, amidst sights that sicken, and under conditions which might well unnerve the strongest men, has

redeemed womanhood from its apparent degradation.

To-day, womanhood is shewing that its proper business is:

"Not to clamour and fight in the fierce of the fray,
But to bind up the wounded and broken;
Not to hinder the lines in their battle array,
But to help on with promise and token,
To trim all the lights that are failing and low
Which point out the way where the footsteps should go."

Then too, there is the brave self-sacrifice of countless fathers and mothers. An English mother was being comforted recently. in that she had three sons on battleships in the North Sea. This was her reply to the one who spoke so kindly to her, "I wish I had ten sons, and that all of them were fighting for their country."

Another who has lost a son already has said, "I shall not put on mourning for my boy, for he gave himself for England."

They told a Belgian General that his son was severely wounded, no sob escaped him, but with a voice quivering with pent-up emotion, he gave his military order.

And this self-sacrifice takes other forms yet. In splendid ways are the people of this land, and

in the lands of our allies, and of our foes making sacrifices for their respective countries.

There is no place for selfness at any time, much less in this time of England's stress and danger. We, in our several capacities and degrees, can, one and all, offer something in this day of England's need. It is great to-day, to-morrow it may be greater yet.

We want the fruits of victory: do we care to share the tribulation through which alone, under God, that victory can come?

The better side of war. Is that not evident amid all the hideousness of warfare?

Time would fail to tell of the glorious heroism of the field of battle, of the magnificent endurance and courage, of the ready obedience of those of whom the poet has sung:

> "Theirs not to reason why,
> Theirs not to make reply,
> Theirs but to do and die."

Again, in civil life, we have surely noted how in this land of ours, how civil strife has been stilled, and the chief rivalry to-day is the glorious rivalry of how to help most to help the nation's cause. The nation is knit into one compact body. Those who live in quiet places know very little yet of the reality and the ravages of

war, but it is only one hundred miles or so away that our own kith and kin, and others are face to face with the stern realities of modern warfare such has never been waged before.

The enemy is all but battering at our gates: there are foes outside, and there are foes inside. These are they who, by word or deed, or, by sheer unconcern make it one whit more difficult for England to meet, and rise above the storm and the stress.

May we, each one, behave not merely as citizens, but as *Christian* citizens, and then, come weal come woe, we shall neither be ashamed nor disgraced.

"England, where the sacred flame
  Burns before the inmost shrine,
Where the lips that love thy name,
  Consecrate their hopes and thine,
Where the banners of thy dead
Weave their shadows overhead,
Watch beside thy arms to-night,
Pray that God defend the right.

"Think that when to-morrow comes
  War shall claim command of all:
Thou must hear the roll of drums,
  Thou must hear the trumpet's call.
Now before they silence ruth,
Commune with the voice of truth;
England on thy knees to-night,
Pray that God defend the right.

" Single-hearted, unafraid,
  Hither all thy heroes came,
On this altar's steps were laid.
  Noble lives, eternal fame.
England, if thy will be yet
By their great example set,
Here beside thine arms to-night,
Pray that God defend the right.

" So shalt thou when morning comes
  Rise to conquer or to fall,
Joyful, hear the rolling drums,
  Joyful, hear the trumpet's call.
Then let memory tell thy heart
' England, what thou wert thou art.'
Gird thee with thine ancient might,
Forth, and God defend the right."

III.—CHRISTIANITY AND PATRIOTISM.

"He committed all to the Lord of the world, and exhorted his soldiers to fight manfully even unto death for the laws, the Temple, the city, the country and the commonwealth . . . and gave as the watchword to them that were about him, *Victory is of God*."—2 MACC. xiii. 14–15.

"He loveth our nation."—ST. LUKE vii. 5.

THE attitude of Christianity toward natural virtues, that is virtues which are not specifically Christian, has been often misunderstood.

In our glowing enthusiasm for the beneficent operation of Christianity upon human ideas and human life, we are somewhat inclined to imagine that the pre-Christian world was devoid of virtue of any kind.

But God did not so leave Himself without witness, and we are not required in the supposed interests of Christianity to decry or disparage the better side of the pagan world.

It is not Christian, for it is not just, either to

exaggerate the vices, or to depreciate the virtues of heathenism. In truth, Christianity found many virtues in existence in the world to which it came. We may be disposed to disparage these as "merely natural virtues"; but if, as we believe, God is the Author and Giver of all good things, then to depreciate so called natural virtues is to forget Him from Whom all good things do come.

Among the several virtues which Christianity found in the world to which it brought its own messages, was that of patriotism.

The mind of Jew and Gentile was saturated with the spirit of patriotism. The love of the Jew for his nation is apparent throughout the pages of the Old Testament, and it grew rather than lessened in the dark days which are, to some extent, covered by the so-called apocryphal writings.

In the Gentile world, throughout the wide dispersion of the Roman Empire, patriotism was regarded as one of the chiefest of virtues. The splendid words of the greatest of Latin Orators had deeply impressed themselves upon the Roman world, "Dear are one's parents, dear are one's children, but all affections are gathered into one love—love of country; on behalf of it what good

man would doubt but that he ought to seek death, if by death it could be profited."

The words of Horace, "It is a sweet and seemly thing to die for one's country" are in line with the saying of Christ Himself, "Greater love hath no man than this that a man lay down his life for his friends."

The words of that poet of the Augustan age expressed, and furthered the spirit of patriotism in the Roman mind. They have echoed far beyond the confines of students of classical literature. They are among the golden sayings of the pagan ages.

It would be well if the further teaching of the heathen poet were widely known, that lack of patriotism is selfishness.

Anyone who is familiar with the writings of the ancient world knows that no Empire has been the centre of such wide-spread devotion as the Roman Empire was, and that no city other than Rome—the Eternal City as men called it—has been so persistently or so passionately loved.

The pages of poets, orators and historians ring with words which thrilled countless generations with a patriotism which considered no sacrifice too great to offer at her altar. Thus, Christianity came to a world, Jewish and Gentile, which

pulsated with a deep and abiding patriotism such as no danger could check, nor any disaster diminish.

How did Christianity regard this virtue which it found in possession of the world ?

Two obvious courses were open. It might have endeavoured to stamp it out as a virtue for which it had no use. But to have attempted to do this would have been to have cut itself off from the better side of paganism, and from Jewish ideas on the matter.

Christianity would thus have started heavily handicapped in its effort to win the world.

It made no endeavour, however, to disparage the virtue of patriotism.

The other course open to the new Religion was to accept patriotism as a virtue, and to adopt it into the system of Christian ethics. On the whole it did this, with one qualification ; it gave it a place lower than that accorded to the supernatural virtues of the Christian life. It could do no other than that. Love of God must rank higher than even love of country to a Christian.

The charge has frequently been made that one result of the expansion of Christianity was the diminishing of this sentiment of patriotism. There were, indeed, ideas and forces which did,

in some degree, tend to lessen the claims of the earthly country upon the affections, devotion and the service of Christian peoples.

Christians who were citizens of the heavenly-commonwealth which is spiritual and eternal could not rightly be wholly absorbed by their citizenship in an Empire which was worldly and temporary.

Further, in the earlier days of the new era, the expectation of the approaching end of all things earthly tended to loosen the ties which bound Christians to a kingdom which was soon to pass away.

Again, however great might be the claims of earthly citizenship, the Christian had not merely the higher claims of love of Christ, but also those of love of the Christian brotherhood. Once more, the Roman State was pagan, and the mighty Empire stood, during the first three centuries, for all that paganism meant. How could Christians be expected to care with unbounded devotion, for a world which had none of their highest ideals, and contradicted their noblest convictions? It is not just to say that Christians were less patriotic than pagans were, without giving all due considerations to these weighty facts.

The marvel is that Christians were as patriotic as they were. It was not only the pagan Roman world which revered the Roman city and Empire. Tertullian, a Christian writer in the second century, held that Rome would last as long as the world did, and that her fall would usher in the Day of Judgment. Lactantius, "the Christian Cicero" thought likewise, and our own historian Bede was of the same opinion.

A modern English poet has well expressed the views of Christian and pagan alike :

> "While stands the Colosseum, Rome shall stand
> When falls the Colosseum, Rome shall fall,
> And when Rome falls, the world."

When Rome fell, the Christian teacher St. Jerome heard of it in his distant cell at Bethlehem with unmixed awe and lament.

We have now to consider the attitude of Christianity toward military service as one of the deepest expressions of patriotism. It cannot be gainsaid that in early times a few distinguished Christian teachers did endeavour to dissuade Christian men from serving in the army of the Roman Empire.

But this rigourist view never made much impression, and therefore never took deep hold on the Christian Church.

This fact is all the more significant to us when we realise what the Christian soldier was required to do, nothing less than to defend and extend an Empire which was pagan to the core, and to fight on behalf of a city which was not merely the capital of the Empire, but also the citadel of Roman paganism. It would, therefore, have been no matter for surprise if Christian men had pleaded conscience as compelling them to refuse military service. That, on the whole, Christianity did not forbid Christian men to take up arms of war shows how highly it rated the natural instinct of patriotism, and how fully it recognised that patriotism is not a mere sentiment, but a sentiment which finds expression, partly at least, in willing self-sacrifice on the field of battle.

It might have been easy to have pleaded conscientious scruples, as some do to-day; but the world has a shrewd way of discounting "conscientious scruples" which save the pocket, or preserve from risks in service and sacrifice. It is not too much to say that if Christianity had from the beginning and continuously forbidden Christian men from military service, they would have been branded with the indelible stigma of cowardice, and of care for themselves rather than love of their country, when such love involved

even life itself. And Christian men would have been indebted to those who in a Christian nation did not profess and call themselves Christians for preserving national existence, for safeguarding their commerce, and preserving their rights. If, in the early days of Christianity, Christian men hesitated to serve in the imperial army, the reason was neither cowardice, nor lack of patriotism, but the fact that, unless relieved by due authority therefrom, the soldier was required to take part in idolatrous rites; for the very standards of the legions were "sacred" things worthy of veneration.

There were indeed later days when under feudalism "a mail-clad hierarchy exchanged the crozier for the sword," and lordly prelates rode to war at the head of their retainers. The prohibition in after-times of those called into the sacred ministry of Christ's Church from taking up arms does not mean that thereby the soldier's calling is condemned, but only that it is not considered seemly that those called specifically to the cure of souls should take part in the carnage of war.

This prohibition has no bearing whatever on the compatibility of the soldier's calling with the Christian profession.

The State has recognised the distinction quite clearly; the restraint of clerical persons from engaging in warfare is part of a wider restraint of clerical persons from implicating themselves in secular affairs.

These must and can express their patriotism in peaceful ways. True Christian patriotism is not expressed merely by military service, it finds scope for its activities in any service that tends to the religious, moral, and social well-being of one's country. Thus, no one is cut off from practical patriotism. Women can display it as well as men, clerical persons as well as laymen.

It is not only in days of warfare that true patriotism can be active. In times of peace it means such things as willing service for one's country, and wise preparation for any national emergency that may arise. It is not just to those, who in years of peace are acting as true patriots, to forget them in days of unrest and danger. No one wants to belittle the movements toward patriotism in these days, but it needs to be remembered that the patriotism of those who are patriots in time of peace is often more potent.

"There is an immense rush of men to serve their country," said one who is responsible for recruiting just now, "but I hope that I may not

seem ungenerous in saying that from the point of view of training officers, a little more patriotic self-denial during the previous years of peace would have had ten times the value of the rush that has waited for the stimulus of war."

As to the moral aspect of patriotism, this may be said in outline, true Christian patriotism is only fully possible when the cause is just.

"How are we to know that?" some one asks. It is indeed often extremely difficult for the private individual to determine that question, but the answer to it may be found, in part, by the opinion of Christendom, not so much of those countries which are involved in any war, but by those untouched by it.

It cannot be gainsaid that the conscience of such Christian nations is expressing itself in the conviction that England's cause to-day is just.

There may still be some who are asking "Wh are we at war?" It may be well, therefore, to give an authoritative answer from the Prime Minister: "In the first place we are fighting to fulfil a solemn international obligation—an obligation which, if it were entered into between private persons in the ordinary concerns of life, would have been regarded as an obligation not only of law but of honour, which no self-respecting

person could possibly have repudiated. Secondly, we are fighting to vindicate the principle which, in these days when material force sometimes seems to be the dominant influence and factor in the development of mankind, that small nationalities are not to be crushed, in defiance of international good faith, by the arbitrary will of a strong and overmastering power. I do not believe that any nation ever entered into a great controversy—and this is one of the greatest history will ever know—with a clearer conscience and stronger conviction that it is fighting, not for aggression, not for the maintenance even of its own selfish interests, but in defence of principles the maintenance of which is vital to the civilisation of the world, and with the full conviction, not only of the wisdom and justice but of the obligations which lay upon us to challenge this great issue. The country will believe that if we are unsheathing the sword, we are doing so in a just cause."

It is not possible here to enter into the political aspects of this matter exhaustively, suffice it to record that the neutrality of Belgium had been assured and re-assured to her during the last century. These treaties Germany deliberately violated when war was inevitable with France,

even though, only a few hours before, the German Ambassador in Belgium had led her to believe that her guaranteed neutrality would be observed by his Government. On the day after German troops had invaded Belgium, the Imperial Chancellor used these words in the Reichstag, "We are now in a state of necessity, and necessity knows no law. Our troops have occupied Luxemburg, and perhaps are already on Belgian soil. This is contrary to the dictates of international law. . . . Anybody who is threatened, as we are, and is fighting for his highest possessions, can have only one thought—how he is to hack his way through."

We are not surprised with these words before us to find the German Embassador to England telling our Foreign Minister that England was plunging into war "just for a scrap of paper, and just for a word, neutrality," and asking whether England had counted the cost of keeping a compact such as that.

Over against these cynical and shameless ideas we may well set the splendid words of a great President of the United States of America, "It must ever be kept in mind that war is not merely justifiable, but imperative upon honourable men, and upon an honourable nation when peace is

only to be obtained by the sacrifice of conscientious conviction, or of national welfare. A just war is in the long run far better for a nation's soul than the most prosperous peace obtained by an acquiescence in wrong or injustice. . . . It must be remembered that even to be defeated in war may be better than not to have fought at all."

The present Prime Minister was, we believe, voicing the sentiment of the whole Empire when he said in reply to Germany, "Sooner than be a silent witness, which means in effect a willing accomplice, of this tragic triumph of force over law, and of brutality over freedom, I would rather see this country of ours blotted out from the page of history." This is the answer not of mere patriotism but of Christian patriotism.

Each of us has his part to play in this day of crisis. We can help this Empire of ours to be strong and patient. In quietness and confidence lies, in part, our strength. We can commend our cause to the God of battles, for our cause is just, though we cannot command success in this present strife.

Amid the din and clash of arms, when merely material forces seem to be the most powerful, we may well remember that, after all, that which

makes a nation great, and keeps it so, is not the material forces of money or mighty armaments, but the moral and spiritual character of peoples—the soul of the nation.

To-day, in this hour of danger, our true patriotism is being tested. Patriotism does not consist in waving flags, or singing martial songs. It consists in doing, in our several vocations and ministries, all that in us lies to minister to our great nation's needs. For various reasons, we cannot all offer up the sacrifice of our lives upon our nation's altar, but we can all spend our lives, so that out of the din and blood of war, England may emerge cleansed and purified.

"No easy hope or lies
  Shall bring us to our goal,
But iron sacrifice
  Of body, will, and soul.

There is one task for all—
  For each, one life to give,
Who stands if freedom fall ?
  Who dies if England live ?

Though all we made depart,
  The old commandments stand ;
In patience keep your heart,
  In strength lift up your hand."

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